

## METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR DETERMINING A VOTING RESULT USING A COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

### Abstract of the Invention

A method and apparatus for allowing voting decisions to be determined through the use of a data communications network is provided. The process begins by sending consent email messages to each of the potential voters that may vote to determine the result of the voting decision. The consent email message includes a hyperlink (URL) to a consent website, where potential voters can access the consent website to provide consent information. Once the consent information for the potential voters has been gathered, a set of eligible voters is determined from the potential voters based on those which provided consent information. The consent information can include consent to receive electronic information regarding the voting decision as well as consent to vote electronically. Based on the set of eligible voters determined, a second email message is sent to each of these eligible voters, where the second email message provides notification of a voting website to these eligible voters. When the eligible voters access the voting website, their identity is validated, and voting information is collected from those eligible voters who consented to vote electronically. Additionally, the voting website may provide the links to the electronic format information corresponding to the voting issue. When an eligible voter casts his/her vote, the voting information provided in the vote is compiled to determine the final voting decision. Compilation may include storing the voting information in a database, and may also include generating and sending transfer agent email messages that provide the voting information to a transfer agent that is responsible for tallying all of the votes that are cast.